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develop more rapidly. This would, of course, be true if he retained his impressibility. An impression upon wax, however, and an impression upon marble are two very different things, as we learned in our First Reader in the primary school.

But whether the individual man has increased in stature or not, there is no denying that the race as a whole has grown from feeble infancy to vigorous manhood, and that every living member of it would vastly prefer his share in existence to that of one of Homer's contemporaries, classical enthusiasts to the contrary notwithstanding.

EDWARD P. JACKSON.

COUNTRY ROADS AND TROLLEYS.

FROM the Colonial era till now the country roads in America have been a reproach to our civilization. Before the War of the Revolution plans were now and again discussed for bringing the various colonies into closer communion by means of well-located and well-constructed highways. In some of the colonies short stretches of good road uniting towns and settlements were built, but there was nothing like a comprehensive system of roads uniting the fringe of settlements along the Atlantic coast, which then constituted the populated part of the continent. The idea in England at that time was that road-making was a matter of purely local concern, and the application of this idea resulted so disastrously that people in one district would suffer for necessities of life, when twenty miles away these very things in unneeded abundance would be perishing from decay. English ideas prevailed in the American colonies, and the roads remained unimproved.

After the War of the Revolution the men who had a genius for administration and the building up of commonwealths appeared to see with entire clearness that the States ought to be connected by a system of good roads, and that branches of these principal roads should unite the various parts of each State. Alexander Hamilton advocated road construction and improvement by the Federal and State governments, and Washington with his practical common sense, recommended that the opening, the making and the maintenance of roads be taken absolutely away from the local authorities. But less wise men could not see how the people of a city were interested in the roads in the country, and why those of one neighborhood should concern themselves about the roads twenty or fifty miles away, which they rarely if ever used. And so, as before the Revolution, the country highways continued, for something like half a century, to be controlled by the purely local authorities.

Meantime Napoleon had given to France a wonderful network of roads; and her agriculture and manufactures flourished notwithstanding unparalleled drains upon her for men and money. In England too the old parish and neighborhood idea of road construction had been in a great measure abandoned and roads after the plans of McAdam and Telford had been constructed nearly all over the kingdom. There was activity too in America and at last the principle was recognized by Congress and by several State legislatures that road-making was a matter for both Federal and State assistance. Several ambitious projects were discussed and the Federal government agreed to lend its aid to the construction of the National Road from tide water in Maryland to the navigable waters of the Ohio River.

This work was started, but the plan was never carried out; and to this day the United States government is a defaulter in its obligations as to the building of this great road.

This abandonment of plans and abrogation of interest would not have been suffered, had it not been that the attention of the people was now directed towards another kind of highway—the steam railroad. The nervous and sanguine Americans of half a century ago were so sure that they would not need wagon roads any longer, as the railroads would serve their every purpose, that they permitted their long cherished plans for road improvement to be abandoned and these highways lapsed into the care of the local authorities who wreaked upon them an ignorant revenge. In the older time the local authorities merely neglected the roads. Now they “worked” them. Several times a year the road inspectors summoned the valetudinarians and other incapables to their assistance and at great expense they piled the dirt from the ditches and the sod from the banks into the middle of the roads, where these materials served to impede and almost entirely stop travel, till the kindly rains washed them back where they rightly belonged.

Less than ten years ago, however, a systematic agitation for the betterment of our country roads was begun, and the influence of this has been felt in every part of the country, while here and there in several of the States the roads of whole counties have been regraded, drained and paved according to the most modern ideas of highway engineers. The record would be most incomplete were it not noted that this agitation was begun, and in a great measure has been kept up by the bicycle riders of the country. For some years road improvement has been one of the most vital of the public questions, and has been discussed with ever increasing interest by State legislatures and county boards. In the aggregate, very little actual building has been done, but in fourteen or fifteen States more liberal road laws have been enacted, laws under which the improvement and maintenance of the roads are less difficult than hitherto. In several of the States laws have been passed under which, under certain conditions, State aid can be given for better roads, and under which also when taxpayers require it the county authorities are compelled to make the needed improvements. But always the road improvers have had bitterly to fight the theorists who maintained that this was a matter of purely local concern. But progress has been steady though not rapid, and in some counties of New Jersey and Pennsylvania many miles of excellently smooth McAdam pavement have been laid. And wherever this has been done the people soon became enthusiastic in the praise of these better highways, for before two seasons have passed in any such locality an unaccustomed prosperity has prevailed, and business activity has taken the place of that stolid patience which is generally a sad and discouraging characteristic of the country side.

But the movement is in sad danger, and more in need of friends than ever before. Just as the steam railroad came into being to kill the efforts of the road builders of a former generation, the trolley is with us now, and the extension of these electric railways menaces road improvement in more ways than one. If we abandon our efforts for better common roads with the idea that the trolleys will satisfy all our needs we will in time realize that the extension of trolley railroads makes good common roads all the more important and necessary, for the trolleys will quicken the life and the movement in the country and make any slow and laborious movements over bad roads more irksome than before. Whenever there is an available

water power a trolley railroad can be operated at an expense ridiculously small when compared to that of the ordinary steam railroad. The country people of this and the growing generation do well to look forward to the trolley railroad as likely to do them immeasurable good. But a fatal mistake will be made if they act upon the idea that when the trolley is in every neighborhood the old highway will not be needed. The old fashioned road will be needed more than ever. The accomplishment of speed begets a demand for speed. People will not be content to labor and flounder through bogs and mudholes for half a mile; because they can fly the remaining ten miles of their journey.

But the men who are engaged at present in extending trolley lines into the country are attempting a much greater wrong than that of the mere neglect of the improvement of the country roads. They are attempting to seize upon these roads and to convert them to their own uses. They appear to lie in wait to take possession of a country road so soon as it shall be put in excellent order for them. The unimproved roads are not nearly so eligible for trolley tracks, but the improved road with its easy grades, its excellent drainage and its McAdam pavement is a trolley roadbed ready made and waiting for the tracks. And so they beset the County Freeholders or County Commissioners for permission to lay these tracks by which, they say, the country people will get genuine rapid transit. More frequently than not the trolley managers get this permission without difficulty, and when the tracks are laid the improved road is ruined for ever. When trolley builders have failed to get the permission of the authorities they have exercised the right of eminent domain and have seized upon the country roads. But here, as also in the other method, they have evidently gone beyond any privilege warranted by law, for the Supreme Court in Pennsylvania, in a recent case, has held that "the laws originally framed to provide transit by street railroads did not anticipate the conversion of suburban and rural roads into long lines of transportation, connecting widely separated cities. The streets of a city or borough are in the control of certain prescribed officials, who grant franchises with the consent of the mayor. The laws, however, very clearly confine the lines of transit within the city or borough limits. Township committees do not enjoy the power invested in city officials; the former have no power to grant the use of roads or subject them to a servitude for the benefit of any corporation."

It is desirable, to be sure, that trolleys should be near common roads, for then they are more easily accessible to those who are to use them; but they should not be over the pavement, nor yet between the pavement and either of the ditches into which the surface water drains. The pavement of a roadway is made for driving on, and the laying of railroad tracks of any kind ends that use quite effectually. Nor should the tracks be put between the pavement and the ditches, for the tracks would interfere with the surface drainage and the pavement and the whole roadbed would be ruined the first time there was a freeze. The side of the road beyond the ditches appears to be the place for trolley roads, for there they would be quite easy of access and not dangerous to life and to rights as sacred as life itself. But permission even for such locations should not be acquiesced in; the trolley builders should be compelled to acquire rights of way by lawful means.

JNO. GILMER SPEED.